

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the river cruise sector, additional attention is needed for safety, especially in the light of the growth experienced and the large number of passengers transported on these ships. This need is further enhanced because many of the passengers have restricted capacity to cope independently. Against that background, the Dutch Safety Board issues the following recommendations:

To Viking River Cruises and other operators active in the river cruise branche:

1. Ensure that during each journey by a river cruise ship, a fully qualified and competent nautical crew is present on the bridge.
 - a. Develop, implement and enforce a customized training programme for the nautical crews, with periodic skills testing.
 - b. In that process, specifically focus attention on command of (foreign) languages (including nautical English) and sufficient local knowledge of the proposed shipping routes.

To the Joint Nautical Authority, the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management and the Flemish Minister of Mobility and Public Works.

2. Tighten up the authorization and competence requirements for nautical crews on river cruise ships within the Scheldt area, making use of the option of including additional provisions in the Western Scheldt Shipping Regulations to ensure safe passage by river cruise ships. Possible provisions relate to familiarity with the navigation zone and/or the obligation to take a pilot on board, if this knowledge is not present. Also investigate whether these measures can be secured internationally.

To the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management:

3. Improve the effectiveness of supervision on river cruise travel:
 - a. Develop a supervision arrangement for coordinated supervision of river cruise shipping.
 - b. Develop a set of tools for effective enforcement of the working language requirement.
 - c. On a structural basis, investigate accidents and incidents involving river cruise ships. Subsequently take action based on the lessons learned and share these lessons and findings with international partners.

Centraal Bureau voor de Rijn- en Binnenvaart (CBRB):

4. Share the findings and lessons learned from this investigation within your national and international network, including the Ledengroep Personenvervoer.